

REMARKS

In response to the above Office action, the specification has been amended to comply with Rule 77 and the Abstract with M.P.E.P. 608.01(b).

In addition, claims 1-12 have been amended to avoid improper multiple dependency, to more accurately claim the invention and to place the claims in more conventional U.S. format.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,802,184 to Brown et al. (hereafter Brown) and claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for being obvious over Brown.

Applicant's invention as set forth in claim 1 relates to a method for assembling a linkplate chain having alternating outer and inner links, the method comprising the steps of:

providing at least two completely prefabricated inner chain links,

positioning the two inner chain links in a row and so that a hollow pin axis of each of the two inner chain links is aligned substantially parallel to a hollow pin axis of the other and to a supporting or retaining face of the inner chain links,

providing at least two link pins,

positioning the at least two link pins so that an axis of each link pin is arranged coaxially with a hollow pin axis of one of the two inner chain links,

inserting the link pins into the hollow pin axes by relative displacement of the link pins and of the two inner chain links in relation to each other so that end regions of each link pins project from both sides of the two inner chain links,

providing at least one pair of outer link plates having receiving holes for the link pins, positioning the outer link plates so that each end region of the link pins is assigned

one of the receiving holes of the outer link plates of the pair of outer link plates and an axis of the receiving holes is aligned with the axis of the associated link pin,

pressing the two outer link plates of the pair of outer link plates in one operation onto the end regions of the two link pins to produce an outer chain link connected to the two inner chain links arranged in row, and

riveting the ends of the link pins.

In Brown as shown in FIG. 4, the pair of outer link plates 62, 62 forming the outer link of the chain are positioned and aligned with the hollow pin axes 68 of the side links 66 of two prefabricated inner links 60 arranged in a row with their hollow pin axes parallel to each other, before the link pins 64 are inserted through one outer link plate 62, then through the hollow axis of an inner link 60 and then through the other outer link 62 to form an outer chain link connected to two inner chain links arranged in a row.

In contrast, in applicant's claimed method the link pins are inserted into the hollow pin axes of the two inner chain links arranged in a row "so that end regions of the link pins project from both sides of the inner chain links" before the pair of outer link plates are pressed onto the end regions of the link pins in one operation (i.e., simultaneously from either side of the inner chain links) to form an outer chain link connected to two inner chain links arranged in a row.

In this way, each end portion of a link pin only comes in contact with one of the outer link plates. In Brown, at least one end region of a pin is completely pressed through two outer link plates. See FIG. 4 as well as FIGS. 16-19 and the displacement of link pins 64 relative to the two outer link plates 62. The resulting chain may be the same as in Brown, but it is made by a different method.

Accordingly, it is not believed that claims 1-3 can be considered anticipated by Brown. Its withdrawal as a ground of rejection of the claims under §102(b) is therefore requested.

The method of claim 4 per se when applied to the method of Brown may be an obvious variant, but when it is combined with the method of claim 1 from which it depends, it cannot be considered obvious because Brown does not show or suggest the method of claim 1. Its withdrawal as a ground of rejection of claim 4 under §103 is therefore also requested.

It is believed claims 1-12 are in condition for allowance

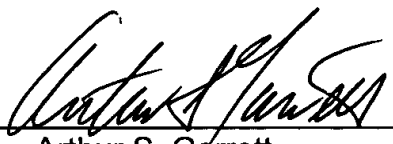
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: March 30, 2004

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Attachments: new Abstract

ABSTRACT

A chain assembly method having the following steps: providing two completely prefabricated inner chain links (1), positioning the inner chain links (1) so that the hollow pin axes (A) of the inner chain links (1) are aligned substantially parallel to each other and to the supporting or retaining face of the inner chain links (1), providing at least two link pins (6, 7), positioning the two link pins (6, 7) so that the pin axes (A) are arranged coaxially with the hollow pin axis (A) of the associated hollow pin (4, 5) of an inner chain link (1), inserting the link pins (6, 7) into the hollow pins (4, 5) by means of relative displacement of the link pins (6, 7) and of the two inner chain links (1) in relation to each other so that the end regions of the link pins (6, 7) project on both sides, providing at least one pair of outer link plates (10, 11), so that each end region of a link pin (6, 7) is assigned one of the outer link plates (10, 11) of a pair of outer link plates and the axes (B) of the receiving holes (12, 13) are aligned with the axis (A) of the associated link pin (6, 7), pressing the two outer link plates (10, 11) of a pair of outer link plates in one operation onto the end regions of the two link pins (6, 7) to produce an outer chain link connected to at least two inner chain links (1) arranged in a row, and riveting the ends of the link pins (6, 7).